

MINUTES
MANSFIELD ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN
Wednesday, May 6, 2009
6:30-8:00 PM
Council Chambers- Town Hall

PRESENT: K. Grunwald (staff), A. Bladen (Chair), J. Stoughton (staff), M.J. Newman,
N. Hovorka, J. Goldman, S. Baxter (staff), C. Guerreri, D. McLaughlin, R. Leclerc
(staff), J. Higham
REGRETS: B. Lehmann, J. Greene, L. Buczynski, Chris Forte, A. Bloom

ITEM	DISCUSSION	OUTCOME
Open	<p>-Welcome: Chair A. Bladen opened the meeting at 6:35 PM</p> <p>-Vote to adopt 4/1/09 Minutes</p> <p>-Report on WOYC events and next year: S. Baxter reported on the Week of the Young Child. She noted that Lisa Young (MDD) and Debbie Giancano (WH) picked up the children's art work from the different Centers and worked on a display. They have agreed to coordinate this event next year. J. Higham sent out thank-you cards to providers and the Town Council issued a proclamation.</p>	<p>The minutes of the 4/1 meeting were accepted as written.</p> <p>We will start planning the WOYC in January next year.</p>
School Readiness Update	<p>- Slot allotments, reimbursement rates: S. Baxter handed out a breakdown of the slot allotments and reimbursement rates for each Center for the coming program year (2009/10).</p> <p>-School Readiness Council Responsibilities: S. Baxter explained that there is a requirement in this grant application for the Council (MAC) to adopt policies that are consistent with the State requirements for this grant. These policies can be reviewed at www.sde.ct.gov; Early Childhood link. One of the questions that the Council needs to be answering is, what are the unmet needs for School Readiness in the community? In response to J. Goldman's question, S. Baxter explained that she has worked with the Centers on an unmet needs survey. It was pointed out that it would be helpful to clarify what a "pre-school experience" is. Several ideas were suggested as to how this information could be obtained; MJ Newman will pursue this with the State Department of Education. C. Guerreri pointed out that several</p>	<p>There will be a School Readiness Task Force meeting on 5/14 combined with the MAC Executive Committee to review the policy requirements for the grant application. Other MAC members are invited to attend. This group will recommend the policies and email them to this group for approval prior to the grant being submitted. S. Baxter will request</p>

	<p>Discovery communities have modified their intake forms to define a pre-school experience.</p> <p>-Professional Development for this year and new grant year: A. Bladen reported that there is \$1000 available for this year to spend on professional development for School Readiness staff, and \$4000 has been budgeted for next year. There is an emphasis on combining inservice training with the public school system. R. Leclerc reported that the training emphasis in the public schools will be on Response to Intervention (RtI); (80% of population should be achieving school goals, 5% intensive intervention, and 15% some intervention). Connecticut has adopted a model of Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI). MJ Newman made a strong case for integrating professional development initiatives between the Centers and the public schools, since both have a similar emphasis. The public school training will be very specific as to how to implement these programs within the District. The goal is to strengthen the teachers by individualizing the educational program for students and teaching to children at all levels (breadth). The School Readiness grant identifies specific areas of professional development for the teachers. S. Baxter identified that there need to be meaningful activities for teachers related to transition for students as they visit each other's classrooms. The goal is to build a bridge/relationship between the pre-school and the K-4 teachers. Some discussion about different transition programs and models that could be implemented here. Suggestions for training or training resources: Autism ("Autism for Dummies", What I Want Every Teacher to Know About Autism, children's books on autism); look at a possible presentation on Birth-3 programs, Differentiated Instruction, Link Between Language and Early Literacy were also suggested as professional development topics.</p>	<p>information on the Discovery listserve.</p> <p>Make efforts to coordinate training initiatives between the Centers and the public school system.</p> <p>R. Leclerc will make the public school training calendar available.</p> <p>Provide resource information on transition programs.</p> <p>J. Stoughton, R. Leclerc and D. McLaughlin will develop recommendations for resources to purchase. Contact Joe McLaughlin to see if he is available to speak on Birth-3 services.</p>
LWG Update	<p>-Review Kindergarten Survey: no discussion.</p> <p>S. Baxter requested that MAC members attend the next meeting of this group on May 28 (5:30-7:30) to talk about governance and accountability. The</p>	<p>S. Baxter will send out a powerpoint presentation on</p>

	<p>Leadership Work Group will submit a Community Plan, and the question becomes -Accountability: Who will the partners be to ensure that the recommendations in this plan are implemented? The expectation is that MAC will take a lead role in this. The goal is to make use of the partners who are currently at the table. One part is how we will make sure that the community is aware of the work that is being done in this area. There will also be an effort to enter into Memoranda of Agreement to get commitment from individuals to take on specific tasks that are part of the strategies identified in the plan. C. Guerreri clarified that this is an internal plan to ensure that we are doing what we said we were going to do. Part of the plan is to identify an internal structure that will ensure that this plan continues to move. Because the plan is not yet built out, the focus of the meeting on 5/28 will tend to focus more on governance. MAC will have to make the final decision about this. Some discussion about how much the work of the Community Plan goes beyond the issues that we have focused on, and looks at the whole child, birth-8, using MAC as an ongoing planning group. J. Higham feels that if we are to expand to that extent then MAC will need to look at the structure of this group to be able to take on more. C. Guerreri replied that she feels that it involves broadening the scope and including new members in this group. The structure of that may focus more on the use of specific task-focused committees. A. Bladen would like to see this be the primary focus of the June 3 meeting.</p>	<p>Accountability to all MAC members.</p>
Preschool Update	<p>-Update on Mansfield Public Schools Preschool Programs: R. Leclerc reported that enrollment is declining in the school district, and in efforts to maintain staffing they are looking at ways of increasing enrollment by taking more children into the pre-school programs. The previous focus has been on special education, and this is changing to "support services" to increase the number of children who can be enrolled. Next year there will be up to 18 children in each classroom. This will include children who do not qualify for special educational services, but who may be defined as "at risk." The school district is required to program for all children 3 and older with special educational needs. They will also include ELL students. J. Higham reported that there has been a lot</p>	<p>There will be an informational meeting for parents on Thursday, 5/14 from 6:30-7:30 to update them on these changes: "Pre-School Parent Information Meeting."</p>

	of discussion around some of the changes in school classrooms and enrollment. For next year there will be 3 pre-school classrooms with one teacher and 2 aides each. Some discussion about the impact that this will have on the private Centers.	
New Calendar	<p>-For New calendar year: S. Baxter asked the group to consider whether or not we will be meeting first or second Wednesday of the month. Members were asked to consider this for the next meeting. C. Guerrerri pointed out that the Discovery self-assessment will be required to be done by the end of July. This will help us to prepare for applying for funding in 2010.</p> <p>-Theme meetings and Regularly occurring topics: no discussion.</p>	<p>Think about an optimal meeting time for next year.</p> <p>Use the June 3 meeting for the Self-Assessment process; schedule a second meeting later in June to discuss governance for the Community Plan. Decided that this group will attend the 6/25 LWG meeting from 5:30-7:30 to discuss governance.</p>
Adjournment and Agenda for next meeting	<p>-Announcements: Willow House received NAEYC accreditation.</p> <p>-Recommendations from the group:</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM. Next meeting is Wed., June 3, scheduled from 6-8 PM. A meal will be provided.</p>	<p>The primary focus of the June 3 meeting will be discussing the role of MAC in light of the recommendations of the Community Plan that is proposed. Meet from 6-6:30 on June 3 to brainstorm on the Community Plan, along with any School Readiness business.</p>

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Grunwald